



## Six Measures for Better Brain Health

By Jean Jeffers, *Staff Writer*

Think you need better brain health?

"A healthy brain is a brain well supplied with blood and which functions in a normal manner," says Dr. Majid Fotuhi, Chief Medical Officer of the Neurology Institute for Brain Health and Fitness in Baltimore, Maryland.

It is the brain that regulates all mechanisms and keeps all systems running. It uses up to half of the body's total oxygen consumed during mental activities, thus making phytochemicals and nutrients in the diet of huge importance.

Scientists once believed that the brain deteriorated as it aged and nothing could be done to stop this process. New scientific thinking is that while the brain ages, there may be new regeneration of cells.

"To increase blood flow throughout your body and keep an adequate brain reserve," says Dr.

Fotuhi, "healthy habits of living are needed." He goes on to say, "Brain reserve is like a retirement account, the more you put in the better. The more you create a healthy brain, the more able it is to resist disease."

The brain functions by relaying impulses from one nerve cell, or neuron, to another throughout the body. This process is dependent on an adequate supply of neurotransmitters, chemical messengers that serve to carry impulses across gaps called synapses. Neurotransmitters are made within the neurons from molecules that are obtained from a healthy diet. Serotonin, norepinephrine, epinephrine, and dopamine are neurotransmitters which influence many body functions such as mood, sleep, appetite, motivation, and memory.

The following health measures are recommended:

1. Get adequate exercise.
  2. Focus on good nutrition
- The Alzheimer's Association

suggests increasing your intake of healthy foods which protect the brain. Dark skinned vegetables such as kale, spinach, Brussel sprouts, and broccoli, as well as red bell peppers, corn, and eggplant are recommended. Also included would be fruits with high anti-oxidant levels and are prunes, raisins, blue

berries, strawberries, raspberries, plums, oranges, red grapes, and cherries. In addition, cold water fish containing omega-3 fatty acids such as halibut, salmon, trout and tuna are advisable. Really a diet much like a Mediterranean diet is what is indicated.

3. Develop meaning in life, reduce stress, if a senior do volunteer work and work on stimulating word games, play with your pet.

4. Cut down on TV time, video games, computer time and use of cell phones. Focus on learning something new, read and ask yourself questions to see if you remember what you read, this way it will stay with you, maybe for the rest of your life.

5. Take fish oil capsules.

6. Take a baby aspirin.

Brain health depends on implementation of these measures and more. Your brain is vital to your health. Why would you do anything to jeopardize its health?

### About the Author

Jean is an RN with an MSN from University of Cincinnati and writes freelance. She is a staff writer for Health & Wellness Magazine and Living Well-50 Plus. She has articles in Infinity Magazine and Diabetes Health and will soon be seen in Christian Living in Mature Years Magazine. Jean has a story in an anthology entitled "Many Roads Taken." (2012) She writes a web page regarding health issues on The Examiner, an online publication. She lives in Cincinnati.

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